



Die to Self Wherever You Go

Believers wholeheartedly committed to the Lord Jesus Christ realize the importance of dying to self in aspects of everyday life. For example, even when traveling from one place to another, a believer's interaction with others should be characterized by dying to self in order to glorify God and demonstrate Christ's love.

In daily life, one can move to many places in a variety of ways. We can simply walk from one room to the next at home or fly across the world on a business trip. When dying to self, the *how* and *where* of travel are not significant. What is significant is the way a believer deals with personal *words*, *thoughts*, and *actions* through the transition points of each day.

While attending a conference of Christian leaders many years ago, my wife and I encountered a situation that vividly demonstrated to us how easily one can fail to die to self and, in the process, lose an opportunity to glorify God and demonstrate Christ's love to others. The conference was so large that participants had to take bus transportation from area hotels to a central conference center. Buses came to the hotels where conference participants were to board via separate queues to each bus.

On the first day of the conference, my wife and I arrived at the loading area early and, as a result, were at the front of one of the queues. When buses began to arrive, however, dozens of our fellow conference attenders behind us pushed and shoved their way around us and boarded the bus. My wife and I were left standing at the curb, staring in disbelief as the fully loaded bus pulled away. Since we remained first in the queue, we prepared to board the next bus but, surprisingly, a similar experience awaited us. We once again were shoved aside by conference participants but, this time, some of the "pushers and shovers" inadvertently moved us into the bus in much the same way that debris is carried along in front of a wall of water. Standing in the bus aisle, my wife and I observed the many talkative and cheerful conference participants, all of whom were seemingly oblivious to the self-oriented manner in which most of them had boarded the bus.

No doubt everyone attending this conference for Christian leaders knew the Golden Rule (*Matthew 7:12, In everything, therefore, treat people in the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets*). They had to be aware of *Philippians 2:3-4*, a passage emphasizing Christ-honoring treatment of others (*Philippians 2:3-4, Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others*). This incident demonstrated that believers can be aware of specific verses but remain a hearer of the Word instead of a doer . . . (*James 1:22, But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves*).

Every believer faces the challenge of dying to self, not only in travel situations but also in many other areas of life. Consider the following steps to die to self, no matter what you do or where you go.

- Set aside time to read through each of the Gospels and notice the many times that Jesus ministered to others while He was traveling from one place to another (for example, traveling through Samaria, or to the other side of the lake, or to Jairus' house). Since He is our example, we learn that we are not to delay serving others until we reach our destination but, instead, we are to serve both before and during the journey.
- Memorize verses that emphasize dying to self and, correspondingly, being a blessing to others (such as *Matthew 7:12* and *Philippians 2:3-4* quoted earlier).
- Pray daily that the Lord would help you recognize situations in which you can die to self in order to bless others. These situations can be as simple as opening a door for others, helping lift a heavy load, picking up and returning a fallen or lost item, allowing others to board transportation ahead of you, greeting others cheerfully, or handing a Gospel tract to someone whom the Lord places in your path. Of course, if you fail to respond lovingly and, thus, neglect dying to self, you can confess your failure to the Lord and receive His forgiveness (*1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*). After confessing your sin of self-centeredness to the Lord, return joyfully to obeying His Word, dying to self, and loving others.
- Plan your day's responsibilities in advance and make an effort to begin traveling a few minutes earlier than necessary. Having a few extra minutes can give you the needed time to be a blessing to others.
- Thank God at the end of each day for giving you opportunities to die to self and bless others. Set aside time to pray for those who received the benefits of your words and actions.

Better planning and time management can enhance one's dying to self and being a blessing to others. Yet, without a servant's heart and perspective, a believer will not die to self as a way of life. Pray diligently for the Lord to help you and fellow believers follow Christ in sacrificial service to others whenever possible. Whether the service is small or large, praise and honor will go to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.